

VISION

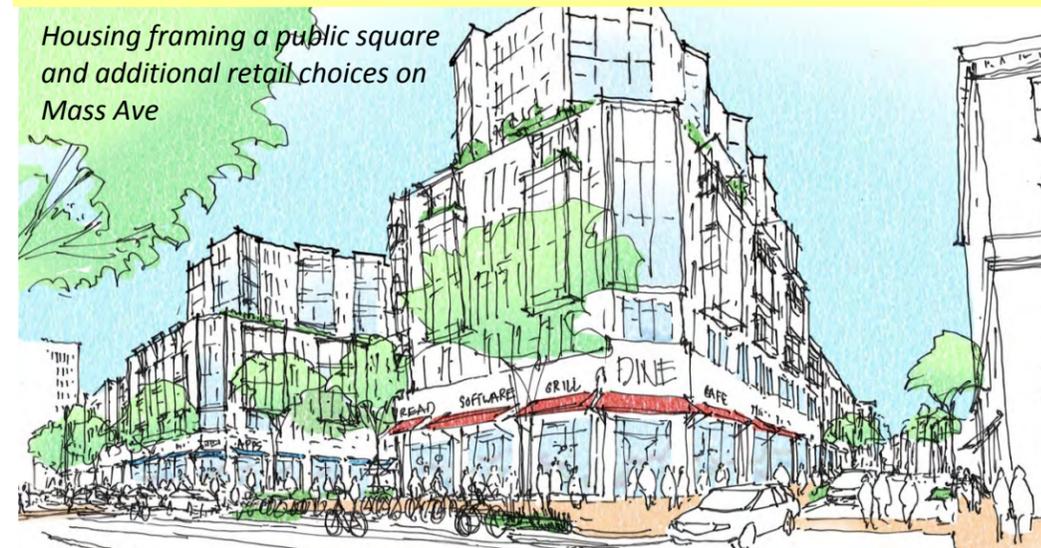
A vibrant and active downtown, well connected to surrounding neighborhoods and the broader city, that invites diverse people to share great community spaces along Massachusetts Avenue and supports a variety of choices for shopping, living, working, and entertainment

This vision translates into four primary goals that frame the master plan strategies outlined on the following pages. To achieve the vision goals, **LEVERAGE FUTURE PRIVATE AND PUBLIC INVESTMENTS**, as appropriate (see page 6).

PUBLIC PLACES TO BUILD COMMUNITY
Enrich the Square’s public realm as place that invites community interaction at many levels



RESIDENTIAL DIVERSITY
Support community diversity through more varied housing choices



Housing framing a public square and additional retail choices on Mass Ave

RETAIL AND NON-PROFIT DIVERSITY
Celebrate and maintain the mix of old and new, venerable and funky businesses



CONNECTING PEOPLE TO THE SQUARE
Enrich neighborhood walkability and livability with safe, green streets and improved access choices



Green infrastructure and neighborhood-scale housing and small business spaces enhancing walkability along Bishop Allen

Goal: PUBLIC PLACES TO BUILD COMMUNITY
Enrich the Square’s public realm as place that invites community interaction at many levels.

OBJECTIVE	PROPOSED STRATEGIES (ZONING)	PROPOSED STRATEGIES (NON-ZONING)
Establish Massachusetts Avenue as a great public place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote lively mixed-use activity in the Central Square core along Massachusetts Avenue between City Hall and Jill Brown-Rhone Park. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve pedestrian street lighting with a plan that addresses safety, convenient access to evening cultural and dining destinations, and identity. Explore options, including LED. Continue application of the façade, signage and lighting improvement
Add and improve public spaces to invite a broader range of community activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create new public gathering spaces through use of zoning requirements and incentives In case of redevelopment, use special permit process to enhance existing public spaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a public-private program for creation of parklets on the sidewalk and/or replacing vehicle spaces in appropriate locations. If City parking lots are redeveloped, a significant public space component should be included e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> creation of an additional public gathering space approx. 10,000sf in area, facing Massachusetts Avenue between Prospect Street and Lafayette Square. Winter Garden/public market or similar enclosed space approx. 5,000sf in area for year-round activity as part of or adjacent to this gathering space
Intensify programming of public spaces to provide opportunities for community activity, celebrating cultural diversity and the arts		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance programming of public spaces by working with CSBA, City agencies, neighborhood and other groups to manage placement and scheduling of elements including buskers, food trucks, and festivals. Work with CSBA, CAC, and property owners to expand ways to integrate more engaging, playful public art engaging people of all ages e.g. in future parklets, vacant storefronts, working with Healthy Play Initiative.
Ensure positive relationship of new development to public space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refine development and design guidelines, with emphasis on limiting shadow impacts on neighborhoods and public spaces; ensuring transparent retail storefronts; enhancing residential street edges and accessibility; limiting new building heights and lengths to fit with context scale; and activating side streets with appropriate retail and office uses. Help fund community benefits like affordable space for housing, retail and non-profit organizations by accommodating modest density and/or height increases where appropriate 	

Goal: RETAIL AND NON-PROFIT DIVERSITY

Celebrate and maintain the mix of old and new, venerable and funky businesses.

OBJECTIVE	PROPOSED STRATEGIES (ZONING)	PROPOSED STRATEGIES (NON-ZONING)
<p>Reinforce Central Square as a vibrant retail destination for nearby neighborhoods and the city</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage lively mixed-use activity in the Central Square core along Massachusetts Avenue between City Hall and Jill Brown-Rhone Park. Encourage housing to expand number of people supporting retail and cultural enterprises. • Consider incentivizing community benefits like affordable space for retail and non-profit organizations by allowing modest density and/or height increases where appropriate. • Strengthen ground floor retail requirements including size, depth, floorplates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the CSBA, City agencies and other existing groups to explore the feasibility of a Business Improvement District (BID) to expand management and funding capacity for initiatives such as marketing, cultural/community events, fielding “ambassadors” in the square, cleanliness, adding and maintaining plantings etc.
<p>Support an attractive and vibrant walking environment by keeping retail storefronts continuously occupied with active uses</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with CSBA, CAC, and property owners to expand opportunities for occupancy of temporarily vacant storefronts e.g. popup retail, art installations
<p>Enable valued businesses and non-profit organizations to get started and maintain a long-term presence in the study area</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize incentives to reduce space costs through waived initial fit-out or rent reductions. • Utilize incentives to fund construction and maintenance of market stalls • Maintain and publicize an inventory of retail and office spaces, diverse in size, to help market spaces to potential new tenants, and to advise current tenants on opportunities for relocations

Goal: RESIDENTIAL DIVERSITY

Support community diversity through more varied housing choices.

OBJECTIVE	PROPOSED STRATEGIES (ZONING)	PROPOSED STRATEGIES (NON-ZONING)
<p>Expand the range of housing choices to serve a broad spectrum of incomes, ages and household sizes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate appropriate infill development and adaptive reuse by reducing minimum parking requirements. • Continue to apply Cambridge’s established inclusionary zoning program, which provides an incentive for developers to include affordable units in new development projects. • Incent development of middle-income family housing and additional affordable housing through means such as density bonus and conditions of city parking lot redevelopment. 	
<p>Promote housing units that are healthy and sustainable places to live</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote housing development close to transit. • Apply green building standards to improve the environmental performance of new and existing buildings. 	

Goal: CONNECTING PEOPLE TO THE SQUARE

Enrich neighborhood walkability and livability with safe, green streets and improved access choices.

OBJECTIVE	PROPOSED STRATEGIES (ZONING)	PROPOSED STRATEGIES (NON-ZONING)
Enhance the street network to make walking more convenient, safe and fun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refine development and design guidelines, with emphasis on limiting shadow impacts on neighborhoods and public spaces; ensuring transparent retail storefronts; enhancing residential street edges and accessibility; limiting new building heights and lengths to fit with context scale; activating side streets with appropriate retail and office uses; and defining distinct districts within the study area. • Enable appropriate infill development and adaptive reuse by reducing obsolete minimum parking requirements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plant street trees where possible, and encourage gardens along residential uses on side streets. • Improve pedestrian street lighting with a plan that addresses safety, convenient access to evening cultural and dining destinations, and identity. • If existing parking lots are redeveloped, require creation of walkable, friendly ground floors and site edges.
Maintain and improve a variety of good transportation choices	(TBD)	
Promote convenient access to business and cultural destinations from within the study area, adjacent neighborhoods, the city and region	(TBD)	
Mitigate transportation-related impacts on established residential neighborhoods	(TBD)	
Add plantings and green infrastructure to encourage a healthier environment		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add stormwater retention and infiltration infrastructure where appropriate to address flooding and water quality challenges

To achieve the vision goals, LEVERAGE FUTURE PRIVATE AND PUBLIC INVESTMENTS, as appropriate. Mitigate any neighborhood impacts such as traffic, noise, shadows, or inappropriate scale.

OBJECTIVE	PROPOSED STRATEGIES (ZONING)	PROPOSED STRATEGIES (NON-ZONING)
<p>Apply criteria to achieve community benefits if city parking lots are redeveloped</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Consider sale of public parking lots for redevelopment according to criteria that help advance the vision. Public parking lot redevelopment could help achieve community goals for Central Square in four significant ways:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) <i>transforming development capacity into desired mixed-income housing, retail, cultural and workplace program</i> 2) <i>leveraging city land ownership to require additional benefits such as expanded park space or improved sidewalks</i> 3) <i>allocating a portion of the parking lots’ real estate value toward funding community benefits.</i> 4) <i>making streets more walkable by replacing open parking lots along sidewalks with attractive, occupied buildings and green spaces</i> • <i>Priority community benefits include:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Requiring a share of new units developed on the site (i.e. 20%) to be affordable to middle-income households</i> ○ <i>Requiring a share of new retail or office space developed on the site (i.e. 5-10%) to be provided at reduced cost to small and/or local businesses such as through provision of free fitout.</i> ○ <i>Requiring advanced green building standards.</i> ○ <i>Requiring a new public plaza/park to be created, equivalent in size to a portion of the site area (i.e. 30%) and located in a priority location for additional public space such as along Massachusetts Avenue.</i> ○ <i>Requiring a winter garden or similar indoor public space at least 5,000sf in floor area to be created</i> ○ <i>Other goals indicated among the strategies above. A strategy for interim provision of public parking during redevelopment is also necessary.</i> 	
<p>Consider establishing a community benefits fund to support benefits over time</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Verify feasibility of an ongoing community benefits fund, considering:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>potential pace and amount of fund contributions</i> ○ <i>priorities for fund application</i> ○ <i>mechanism for fund management</i> 	
<p>Continue to promote sustainability in planning, design, and development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Promote housing development close to transit.</i> • <i>Apply green building standards to improve the environmental performance of new and existing buildings.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Add stormwater retention and infiltration infrastructure where appropriate to address flooding and water quality challenges</i> • <i>Plant street trees where possible, and encourage gardens along residential uses on side streets.</i> • <i>Enhance bicycle infrastructure to be safer and more convenient.</i>